

## Weatherization Program Is a Capital Idea for Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. was built on a marshy, damp plot of land, which deterred early settlers and slowed growth. Today, Washington, D.C., is a vital metropolis, that continues to develop and diversify. Residents enjoy unique opportunities living in the nation's capital, as well as challenges, including some of the highest energy costs in the country. This is particularly onerous for low-income households, who already bear a disproportionate energy burden. To alleviate this pressure, the District of Columbia partners with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (Weatherization). Weatherization reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

Low-income households typically spend 14% of their total annual income on energy, compared with 3.5% for other households. This burden becomes more unmanageable when energy prices soar. Low-income families often cut back on other necessities to pay their energy bills. Weatherization reduces home energy consumption, which provides a permanent boost to the household's budget. This also protects the household from future fluctuations in energy prices and supplies.

The District of Columbia Energy Office (DCEO) administers the Weatherization Assistance Program and a network of local community-based agencies delivers energy efficiency services to eligible residents. The Energy Office is also the administrator of the Reliable Energy Trust Fund (RETF), created through utility restructuring. DCEO has proposed several new programs for the RETF, which would increase the number of low-income households receiving energy efficiency services.

Weatherization crews use computerized energy audits and advanced diagnostic equipment, such as the blower door, to determine the most cost-effective energy efficiency measures for each home. Services are delivered to single-family

### NATIONAL WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Homes weatherized in 1999	68,000
DOE allocations in 1999	\$135 million
Average annual energy cost savings per household	\$300
Average space heating savings	25-30%
Energy benefits returned for every \$1 invested	\$2.10
Jobs supported	7,000

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Homes weatherized in 1999 (with DOE \$)	208
DOE funding in 1999	\$379,137
Clients served in 1999	
Elderly	41%
People with disabilities	10%
Families with children	49%

and multi-family homes. Weatherization crews also test heating units for carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly in large concentrations. Typical weatherization services include installing insulation; sealing ducts; tuning and repairing furnaces; and mitigating heat loss through windows, doors, and other infiltration points. Clients are educated on the proper use and maintenance of the installed measures.

**COLLABORATIVE CAMPAIGN**

The DCEO partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and a local management company to resuscitate a distressed low-income apartment complex, which was riddled with energy, structural, and social problems. The buildings' heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems were ailing, most units were lacking windows, and rampant crime was driving out the few remaining residents. DCEO conducted an energy audit and identified prime areas of air infiltration and energy loss. The weatherization crew tuned and repaired the HVAC systems, replaced existing light fixtures with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps, repaired and replaced windows, and performed widespread air sealing measures. The property management company contributed 10% of the cost of the installed materials.

During a follow-up inspection, the company noted that the fuel bills for the complex declined by nearly 30% after the weatherization measures were installed. The Vice President of the management company congratulated the weatherization crew for its skillful work and the negligible bureaucracy during the weatherization process. "The paperwork we had to complete was minimal... The work was completed in a timely manner, the contractors were very professional, and the D.C. Energy Office was professional and a pleasure to work with."



*Weatherization worker prepares to install insulation in a low-income home.*

**MONUMENTAL BENEFITS**

The Weatherization Assistance Program creates energy, economic, and environmental benefits for low-income households and the entire community. By reducing energy bills for low-income families, Weatherization keeps money in the community that would otherwise be exported out to pay for energy. Households can use the energy savings to purchase other necessities in local stores. This spurs local economic growth and creates additional jobs.

By reducing demand for energy, weatherization also avoids harmful emissions from residential buildings and power plants. This improves local air quality and reduces related health effects, particularly asthma. In addition, weatherization reduces annual emissions of carbon dioxide, a leading greenhouse gas, by an average of one metric ton per weatherized home. For a densely populated city with heavy traffic congestion like Washington, D.C., mitigating harmful emissions is particularly important.

**WEATHERIZATION WORKS!**

Washington, D.C., was created with American ingenuity and a bold vision. It stands as a testament to the American ideals of freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The District of Columbia Weatherization Assistance Program promotes these ideals by reducing the energy burden for low-income families and creating energy, environmental, and economic benefits for the community. Nationally, for every \$1 invested in the program, Weatherization returns \$2.10 in energy-related benefits. Weatherization curbs national energy consumption and reduces demand for imported oil. Weatherization works for the District of Columbia and America!

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, CONTACT:**

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Visit the Weatherization Web site at: [www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/weatherization\\_assistance](http://www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/weatherization_assistance)  
or call the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse at: 1-800-DOE-3732



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